

## **What are HAs, HMAs, and AML?**

The BLM is responsible for the protection, management, and control of wild horses and burros. Under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, wild horses and burros may only be managed on areas (Herd Areas) where they were found in 1971.

Through land use planning with public involvement, the BLM evaluated each herd area to determine if adequate habitat (food, water, cover and space) was present to sustain healthy wild horses and burros over the long term. Suitable herd areas (HAs) were then designated as herd management areas (HMAs).

The BLM is also responsible for determining the appropriate management level (AML) of wild horses and burros within each HMA. The AML is the number of wild horses and burros which results in a thriving natural ecological balance and avoids a deterioration of the range. The AML is expressed as a population range within which wild horses and burros can be managed for the long-term.

AML is set with public involvement through an in-depth environmental analysis and decision process. The analysis is based on evaluation of intensive monitoring data collected over several years. Studies of grazing utilization, range ecological condition and trend, actual use, climate (weather) data, use patterns, animal distribution, and the results of land health assessments are considered. In setting the AML, the BLM must also consider use by wildlife, permitted livestock, and wild horses and burros in the area.